

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 6378

As Passed House:

March 5, 2002

Title: An act relating to part-time leaves of absence for law enforcement members of the law enforcement officers' and fire fighters' retirement system plan 2.

Brief Description: Authorizing part-time leaves of absence for law enforcement members of the law enforcement officers' and fire fighters' retirement system plan 2.

Sponsors: By Senators Spanel, Carlson, Jacobsen, Winsley, Fraser, Regala, Rasmussen, McAuliffe, Kohl-Welles and Keiser; by request of Joint Committee on Pension Policy.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Appropriations: 2/25/02, 2/26/02 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/5/02, 97-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates a part-time leave of absence provision for law enforcement members of the Law Enforcement Officers' and Fire Fighters' Retirement System, adding to existing unpaid leave of absence provisions.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 22 members: Representatives Sommers, Chair; Doumit, 1st Vice Chair; Fromhold, 2nd Vice Chair; Sehlin, Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Buck, Clements, Cody, Cox, Dunshee, Grant, Kagi, Kenney, Kessler, Linville, McIntire, Pearson, Pflug, Ruderman, Schual-Berke, Talcott and Tokuda.

Staff: Andrea Hardy (786-7349).

Background:

The Law Enforcement Officers' and Fire Fighters' Retirement System Plan 2 (LEOFF 2) requires that members earning service credit be full-time, fully compensated eligible employees. LEOFF 2 also contains provisions for employer authorized full-time unpaid

leaves of absences. Under these provisions, members may purchase up to two years of service credit upon return to full service, by paying the member, employer, and state contributions to the Department of Retirement Systems (DRS) within five years of returning to service.

A member may also receive service credit for a full-time paid leave of absence if that member serves as an elected official of a labor organization and the employer is reimbursed by the labor organization for employer contributions. A member elected or appointed to a state office may choose to continue membership in LEOFF 2 even if the member does not continue in full-time status. This is the only circumstance under which a member may continue earning service credit for status other than full-time.

Currently, if a member wishes to take a part-time leave of absence, the member is ineligible for LEOFF 2 membership during that period because the member is not considered a full-time, fully compensated eligible employee. Under these circumstances, the member is not permitted to earn or purchase service credit for that period.

Summary of Bill:

A part-time leave of absence provision for law enforcement members of LEOFF 2 is added to existing leave of absence rules. The part-time leave must be authorized by the member's employer, and the member is prohibited from other employment with the employer during the part-time leave. The member may purchase service credit for the portion of time worked during the part-time leave of absence and, upon return to full-time employment, may purchase service credit for periods of part-time leave up to the existing two-year limit by paying the member, employer, and state contributions, plus interest, within five years of returning to full-time employment.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: This is a good bill. It provides new flexibility that would give law enforcement officers and employers the opportunity to agree on a part-time job share situation so an employee could work part-time and go to school, care for a sick parent or child, or take additional time off to raise a child. It will also help departments to save money by providing new flexibility to employees and therefore encouraging employees to stay with their employers.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Melissa Locke and Susie Coberly, Washington Council of Police and Sheriffs.